

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00
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INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 215
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USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
COMPHIBRON SIX
COM THREE FOUR MAU
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0507

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION FEBRUARY 3-4

REF: BEIRUT 0447 (DTG 021603Z FEB 77)
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1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENTS SARKIS AND ASAD DISCUSSED THE SOUTH IN
DAMASCUS ON FEB 2. SYRIAN ASF FORCES HAVE OCCUPIED A CHRISTIAN
BARRACKS IN BEIRUT AND RAIDED A MUSLIM WEAPONS CACHE IN TRIPOLI.
ISRAELI PLANES REPORTEDLY ATTACKED A PALESTINIAN CAMP NEAR TYRE ON
FEB 3. CHRISTIANS HAVE BEGUN TO RETURN TO AN ABANDONED VILLEGE IN
THE SOUTH. TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN AND SUNNI LEADERS HAVE BEEN PAYING

SYMBOLIC FRIENDSHIP VISITS TO EACH OTHER. THE DIRECTOR OF THE FAO
FAO HAS ARRIVED IN BEIRUT. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT SARKIS MEETS PRESIDENT ASAD.

A. PRESIDENT SARKIS MET WITH PRESIDENT ASAD IN DAMASCUS ON FEB 2.
THE RESULTING JOINT COMMUNIQUE, AS CARRIED IN BEIRUT'S PRESS, SAID
THAT "THE TWO PRESIDENTS ACCORDED TO THE QUESTION OF SECURITY IN
THE SOUTH THE ATTENTION IT DESERVES AND EXAMINED THE COMPLICATIONS
WHICH COULD RESULT FROM A DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION IN THE
AREA." IN ADDITION, LEBANESE PAPERS QUOTED ASAD AS TELLING
JOURNALISTS THAT: "THE SYRIAN TROOPS IN LEBANON ARE UNDER THE
COMMAND OF PRESIDENT SARKIS; IF ASKED TO ADVANCE TO THE MOST FOR-
WARD POSITION IN SOUTH LEBANON, THEY WOULD DO SO, JUST AS THEY
WOULD EXECUTE ANY ORDER GIVEN TO THEM."

B. ON OTHER MATTERS, THE COMMUNIQUE SAID PRESIDENT ASAD HAD ACCEPTED
AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT SARKIS TO VISIT LEBANON AT A DATE TO
BE ANNOUNCED. ALSO ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE, THE TWO PRESIDENTS
EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE IMPROVEMENT OF SECURITY IN
LEBANON, REITERATED THEIR "ABSOLUTE FAITH" IN LEBANON'S UNITY AND
AND SOVEREIGNTY, AND EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY OF ENCOURAGING "ARAB
SOLIDARITY" IN VIEW OF UPCOMING DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES.

C. ON FEB 3 AND 4 BEIRUT NEWSPAPERS OF ALL POLITICAL PERSUASIONS
TERMED THE COMMUNIQUE A DOCUMENT OF MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE. PRO-
LIBYAN AS SAFIR CLAIMED THAT THE COMMUNIQUE WAS "THE FIRST STATE-
MENT OF ITS KIND IN THE HISTORY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES." RIGHTIST AL AMAL SAID THE TALKS WERE THE "MOST IMPORT-
ANT" SINCE THE LEBANESE CRISIS BEGAN. INDEPENDENT AN NAHAR REPORTED
THAT THE TWO SIDES HAD AGREED THAT THEY SHOULD NOT DEAL WITH THE
PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN "LIGHT WEAPONS" UNTIL THE LEBANESE ARMY HAD
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BEEN REORGANIZED AND THE CAIRO AGREEMENT FULLY IMPLEMENTED.

3. ASF OCCUPIES CHRISTIAN BARRACKS. ACCORDING TO DATT AND OTHER
SOURCES, ON FEB 3 SYRIAN ASF FORCES BEGAN AN ORDERLY TAKEOVER OF
THE LEBANESE ARMY'S EAST BEIRUT TARABULSI BARRACKS, WHICH HAD BEEN
OCCUPIED BY CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS. THERE WAS NO REPORTED RESISTANCE,
AND THE TAKEOVER WAS TO BE COMPLETED ON FEB 4. THIS ACTION SEEMS
PART OF SYRIAN EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH CONTROL OVER BOTH SECTIONS OF
THE CAPITAL AND FOLLOWS OCCUPATION OF TWO LEBANESE ARAB ARMY
BARRACKS IN WEST BEIRUT ON JAN 25 (SEE JAN 26 SITREP).

4. ASF RAID NEAR TRIPOLI. ACCORDING TO THE MODERATELY CONSERVATIVE
AL SHARQ ON FEB 4, ASF FORCES RECENTLY CONFISCATED A CACHE OF
(PRESUMABLY MUSLIM) WEAPONS IN TRIPOLI. THIS MOVE APPEARS TO BE
PART OF A SYRIAN DRIVE TO COLLECT WEAPONS AND, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE
SOURCES, FOLLOWS SIMILAR RAIDS IN DEIR AL AHMAR (SEE FEB 2 SITREP),
AL KHADDAM, AND THE SOUTHERN MATN.

5. REPORTED ISRAELI AIR RAID. ACCORDING TO LEBANESE MILITARY IN-

TELLIGENCE OFFICIALS, PALESTINIAN SOURCES REPORTED ON FEB 3 THAT ISRAELI PLANES HAD ATTACKED THE REFUGEE CAMP AT RACHIDIYE, ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS SOUTH OF TYRE. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THIS REPORT.

6. RETURN OF CHRISTIAN VILLAGERS IN THE SOUTH. AL SHARQ REPORTED ON FEB 4 THAT THE PEOPLE OF ASHIYAH, AN ABANDONED CHRISTIAN VILLAGE IN THE SOUTH, HAD BEGUN TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. THE PAPER ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE RECENT DEPLOYMENT OF THE ASF TO THE NABATIYAH AREA.

7. GESTURES OF RECONCILIATION. TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN AND SUNNI LEADERS ARE CONTINUING TO PAY SYMBOLIC VISITS TO EACH OTHER. AFTER SEEING FORMER PRIME MINISTER SAEB SALAM ON FEB 1 (SEE FEB 2 SITREP), PHALANGE CHIEF PIERRE GEMAYEL MET WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER TAKIEDDINE SOLH ON FEB 2. MEANWHILE, SALAM ON FEB 2 AND 3 SAW PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS, FORMER PRIME MINISTER RASHID KARAME, CONFIDENTIAL

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CHRISTIAN LEADER ALEXANDER GEMAYEL, AND MARONITE PATRIARCH ANTONIOS KHURAYSH. NATIONAL MOVEMENT LEADER KAMAL JUNBLATT, ACCORDING TO AL MOHARRIR ON FEB 4, PRAISED THE "PATRIOTISM" OF PRESIDENT SARKIS AND THE "HIGH QUALITIES" OF PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS.

8. TRAVELERS. FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL OFFICE DIRECTOR GENERAL EDOUARD SAUMA ARRIVED IN BEIRUT ON FEB 3 (SEE FEB 1 SITREP). MEANWHILE, RIGHTIST AL AMAL REPORTED THAT THE SOVIET EMISSARY SCHEDULED TO VISIT THE MIDDLE EAST IS VLADIMIR VINOGRADOV, WHO REPRESENTED MOSCOW AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN DECEMBER 1973 (SEE JAN 31 85430).
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